

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

Chairman

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SHORT-STORY CONTEST AWARDS

The sixth annual Christian Short-story Contest was sponsored this fall by the Christian Literature Commission of the National Christian Council. Out of a total of 49 contributors, the first prize of Yen 20,000 was awarded to Mr. Shiba Shunsaku, associate pastor of Kyoto Church. The winning manuscript was entitled Kisaku and His Son, a story of Japanese farm life. The second place award went to Shinya Miyajima, a student of Aoyama University, while Masao Koro of Mitaka Church was awarded third prize.

JAPANESE CHURCHES & THE AMERICAN G. I.

A unique ministry to American servicemen stationed in Japan is being carried on under the auspices of the National Christian Council. This program, operating in four areas of the country, seeks to bring Japanese Christians and American military personnel together under the banner of Christ, the common Lord. In the United States, the Cooperative Committee on Ministry to Service Personnel in the Far East (representing more than 30 American denominations) has recruited three missionaries for this task and provides financial support. The Reverend Donald F. Sears is program coordinator for Japan.

In Fuchu and Tachikawa five Japanese pastors give part of their time to this ministry. The Reverend M. Kuyama has taken a group of singers from Tachikawa Air Base who specialize in Negro spirituals to five churches in the area. Mr. Kuyama also sets up ping-pong tournaments and judo matches between American airmen and Japanese boys, and recently has arranged sports events for G. I.'s at a near by Japanese reformatory. The Reverend Sue Okubo and his congregation maintain contact with women's groups at military chapels in the Fuchu area. He organizes monthly tours for the Americans, and has arranged for leading members of his community to meet socially with American officers and their families. Last month the young people of Fuchu Church began to invite airmen from the bases to a weekly fellowship meeting. On five successive Thursday evenings, the numbers of those participating were 3, 11, 18, 24, and 28. This group is planning Christmastide programs of "witness through Christian song" in the Fuchu area.

In Kobe, the Reverend and Mrs. W. C. McLauchlin minister to transient personnel of the United States Navy. The sailors are invited to Kobe Union Church for fellowship meetings that include movies of America, singing, preaching, common prayer, and games. Navy men have been entertained in the homes of members of the church. The McLauchlins have directed the boys to reliable shopping areas and decent liberty spots, and have been instrumental in precipitating real works of repentance among non-Christian servicemen.

In front of Johnson Air Base, Musashi-machi, Saitama Prefecture, stands the only Christian Fellowship Center building, as such, operated by the National Christian Council. There Mrs. Clara P. Otis, an American Methodist, joins with the Reverend and Mrs. Donald F. Sears, Presbyterian, U. S. A., and Mr. Sunao Tokobiki in offering activities of fellowship in Christ to airmen and their Japanese neighbors. A supervisory committee of three local U. S. Air Force chaplains and three Japanese pastors meets regularly with the staff to direct the work of the Center.

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The Johnson Air Base Center provides opportunities for service both to airmen and to Japanese church members. Last summer a number of G. I.'s helped with painting projects at two Japanese churches. Now servicemen have planted a crop of wheat to harvest for the needy. Several are teaching English and English Bible classes at the Center. One airman, converted to Christianity only two months ago, has written six skits depicting Biblical events and aspects of the Christian life, and has volunteered to present these skits in connection with worship programs. Japanese Christians have entertained servicemen in their homes and in their churches. During August a group of G. I.'s and Japanese young people--twelve in all--climbed Mount Fuji and held a Christian worship service together at the top of the mountain.

There is, of course, the danger that such fellowship, if it becomes ingrown, may separate Christians from creative participation in the life of the wider community. The leaders, however, assert that the Center represents one of the few off-base activities strong enough to attract men away from the immorality of bars, brothels, and black-market vice, and into the wholeness of the life in Christ. Plans are now underway to expand the National Council's effort by setting up a new Center in the downtown area of Yokohama.

LEADER FROM BRAZIL VISITS JAPAN

The Reverend M. Richard Shaull of Brazil visited Japan November 2-5, meeting with a number of groups in the Tokyo area having concern for Christian student work, theological education, and industrial evangelism. Mr. Shaull is Dean of the Presbyterian Seminary at Campinas, Brazil, and General Secretary of the Brazilian Student Christian Movement. He is on his way to accept an invitation from the Indian Student Christian Movement to speak at the Triennial Assembly at Andhra College in Guntur, December 26 to January 1, and to visit SCM groups in India.

Mr. Shaull, who has worked for sixteen years as a missionary in Latin America, discussed with students and leaders a new strategy of evangelism which is proving fruitful in Brazil. According to this plan, the tiny Christian group is encouraged to remain and to participate redemptively within the wider, secular community of which it is a part--rather than being pulled away from the community to find its refuge in traditional church activities or in a "student center" program of the more conventional variety.

Another purpose of Mr. Shaull's stopover in Japan was to locate a Japanese student worker who might be willing to go to Brazil to work among the large number of Japanese students in Sao Paulo.

FAMILY LIFE CONFERENCE MEETS

Hoshino Onsen, near Karuizawa, was the scene of the sixth National Conference on Family Life, held on November 5-7. 41 delegates from many parts of Japan took part in this meeting, which was led by Miss Ai Sasaki, secretary of the New Family Life Movement of the National Christian Council. Representatives of the United Church, Baptists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Korean Church in Japan members were in attendance, as well as workers from the YMCA, YWCA, and the Christian Kindergarten Association. Eight of the delegates were western missionary personnel.

The conference faced such current social problems as broken homes, juvenile delinquency, and undesirable boy-girl relationships. The group urged that Christians become more active in such social service ventures as family counselling agencies, the Japanese family courts, and adoption agencies. The ever-present problem of church young people who marry into non-Christian homes was considered, and it was emphasized that Christian youth should have the benefit of both pre- and post-marital counselling. The conferees stated that Christian homes should be open to the community, with special reference to the needs of underprivileged children and of students from overseas.

UNITED CHURCH PLANNING & BUDGET

The Executive Committee of the United Church of Christ in Japan convened at Ito on October 22-25. It was decided that the United Church should become a member of the East Asian Christian Conference, with Dr. Takeshi Muto as the denomination's representative to this newly-formed ecumenical body..

The LaCour evangelism program, previously under the auspices of the Centenary Committee of the National Christian Council, is henceforth to be sponsored by the United Church.

The United Church budget for the year 1958 was approved as follows:

Headquarters Maintenance	Yen 8,050,000
Evangelism	9,750,000
Council of Cooperation	27,230,000
Committee Meetings	8,660,000
Pension Plan for Pastors	5,150,000
Building Program	2,150,000
Publishing Program	47,340,000
Contingent Fund	<u>48,393,000</u>
TOTAL	Yen 156,723,000

The Japan Christ Church (Presbyterian) held its annual
meeting at the Christ Church, Tokyo, Japan, on the
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BAPTISTS EMPHASIZE LAY TRAINING

The Japan Baptist Convention, claiming 9,869 members in 64 congregations throughout the country, reported 454 baptisms and 214 accessions by transfer of membership during the first six months of 1957.

A current emphasis in the Baptist churches is on training in the faith for laymen. Members and seekers of all ages are included in the church school program. Sunday evening services in each parish are followed by a study meeting. Each local congregation is divided according to geographical area into small groups or cells, each such group of not more than five members having a captain. As a result of this program, the Baptists state that no members were lost to the church during the six month period of January-June, 1957.

JAPAN CHRIST CHURCH HAS ANNUAL MEETING

The Japan Christ Church (Presbyterian) held its annual meeting on October 15-17 at Kashiwagi Church, Tokyo, where the Reverend Mrs. Tamaki Uemura serves as pastor. The denomination has 94 congregations and 14 preaching points, with a total membership of 9,718. The reported baptisms for last year numbered 468.

NCC PROTESTS GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL

The National Christian Council is protesting a suggestion by Japanese government authorities which, if enacted into law, would seriously impair Sunday Church School attendance throughout the nation.

Asahi Shimbun on November 5 reported the concern of the Ministry of Education that Japanese school children attend many movies that are by no means wholesome. The proposal was made that recommended movies be shown at local theatres throughout the country every Sunday morning, and that school children be encouraged to participate.

This report was taken up at the Family Life Conference at Karuizawa, reported elsewhere in this issue. The Executive Board of the National Christian Council has submitted a carefully-worded statement to the Ministry of Education, outlining the Church's concern and explaining the vital importance of the Sunday School program for children of the Church.

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"READ CHRISTIAN BOOKS!" -- LITERATURE COMMISSION

"Women, Read More Spiritual Food!" was the theme of a number of significant meetings held during October and November under the auspices of the Christian Literature Commission of the National Christian Council.

At the Free Methodist Church of Osaka on October 29, and again the next day at Imaike Lutheran Church in Nagoya, Dr. Bunnosuke Sekine, literature professor at Tokyo Eiwan Women's College, and the Reverend N. Ebizawa, director of the Christian Literature Commission, were the featured speakers. Dr. Sekine discussed his conviction that Christianity can provide a foundation for culture in the new Japan. If this is to happen, he pointed out, Christian books and other literature will play an important role. Mr. Ebizawa reminded his listeners that the culture of nations is largely influenced by the knowledge and training of women. Mothers especially should read Christian books as "daily food for the spirit" so that they may grow both spiritually and intellectually.

At the Tokyo YWCA hall on November 5 Mrs. Teruko Kambe, wife of a late professor at Tokyo University, and Mrs. Yoko Matsuoka, executive secretary of the Japan PEN (Poets, Essayists, and Novelists) Club addressed the gathering. Mrs. Matsuoka was prominent during the recent International PEN Convention held in Tokyo. The Tokyo gathering also viewed a motion picture, "Together with Elder Sister", a story of Japanese family life, a picture that won international recognition at the Venice Film Festival. More than 400 women took part in this Tokyo meeting.

